

**JUDGES COPY**

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**

**Plaintiff,**

**vs.**

**BELINDA JOHNSON,**

**Defendant.**

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**No.02 CR 944-5**

**Judge Milton Shadur**

**RECEIVED**

**APR 16 2003**

**MILTON I. SHADUR  
SENIOR U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE**

**FILED**


**APR 16 2003**

**MICHAEL W. DOBBINS  
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT**

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

To: Jeffrey H. Cramer  
Assistant U.S. Attorney  
219 S. Dearborn St.  
Chicago IL. 60604

Please be advised that on April 16, 2003 I caused to be *hand delivered*/ mailed to the  
above mentioned persons **BELINDA JOHNSON'S STATEMENT TO THE COURT &  
CHARACTER LETTERS.**

  
Ellen R. Domphe

**DOCK**  
**APR 16 2003**

Ellen R. Domphe  
Attorney for Defendant  
53 W. Jackson Blvd., #1515  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-922-2525

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APR 16 2003

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No. 02 CR 944-5

Judge Milton Shadur

STATEMENT OF BELINDA JOHNSON & CHARACTER LETTERS

Now comes BELINDA JOHNSON, by her attorney, Ellen R. Domphe and submits the  
attached statement to the court & character letters.

FILED

APR 16 2003

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ellen R. Domphe

MICHAEL W. DOBBINS  
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT

RECEIVED

APR 22 2003

Ellen R. Domphe  
53 W. Jackson Blvd., #1515  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-922-2525

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**BELINDA JOHNSON'S STATEMENT TO THE COURT**

The day I was arrested on this case was the beginning of a journey that I believe will enable me to pick up the pieces of my life, a life that I almost destroyed by years of criminal activity. I have been in federal custody since October 2002 and frankly, I am relieved. Awaiting the outcome of this case I have had considerable time to evaluate my past and future. So I am writing this statement to the court, not to excuse myself, but rather to explain a few things about myself.

To begin, I am guilty of the charged crime and I accept full responsibility for my role in the offense. I have never denied my actions- I immediately admitted my conduct to the federal agents when I was arrested in October 2002. I am sorry and have sincere remorse for my actions, not only because of the damage I have done to strangers-victims, but for the damage that I have done to my children, who have engaged in crime and harmed themselves and others. I clearly am responsible for committing crimes and leading a greedy lifestyle that undoubtedly influenced my children. After all I am their mother; their role model and I subjected them to the negative aspects of my life- arrests, courts and prisons. I chose my life but naively believed my daughters lives would be different. I wanted them to graduate high school, go to college and to have fruitful and productive lives. I hope they still can. Although my daughters clearly learned by my example I truly was not always aware of their illegal activity. For instance, I learned that my youngest daughter Laquesha Holmes (18) had a bad check writing case when the Evergreen Park Police Department contacted me to come to the police station to pick her up. I was hurt and shocked by her conduct at the time, but now I realize my part in it- my example.

As far as my life, I was raised by my adoptive parents Roy and Ernestine Holmes who died within 3 months of each other. Roy died on February 12, 1979 from a stroke and Ernestine on May 9, 1979 from a brain tumor. My biological parents are Robert and Deola Johnson. I learned about Deola when I was 12. An uncle took me to a family reunion and my biological mother was there. She told me she was my real mother. I thought she was crazy. I asked Ernestine but she did not discuss it with me at that time. When I was 18 I traveled to Chicago and began a relationship with my birth mother. A few years later I learned who my natural father was.

After Ernestine and Roy died my life drastically changed. By 1982 I was in prison. When I

was released in 1983 I started snorting cocaine occasionally but by 1986 my habit had progressed to regular use. After my release from prison in May 1996 I began regularly using cocaine again. Undoubtedly my drug use was intertwined with my criminal activity-it took significant money to pay for my habit. I cannot however say the drug use caused my crime because it didn't-I was breaking the law before my cocaine use. Cocaine just brought me further away from turning my life around.

How I got where I am today is complex. I didn't learn it from my parents. Somehow I found myself young with kids and no skills; I began finding ways to provide for me and my kids. Soon it was what I knew. I tried working at temp agencies and as a receptionist and data processor, but could not make a go at it. Now, again I find myself facing yet another prison term. I believe it will be my last. Seeing my daughters in jail with me was the last straw. Being locked up is painful; but nothing has been more painful than being locked up with two of my children, learning that the third was also arrested, and knowing that I played a role in their fate. I've cried every day since they were arrested. I genuinely love my family and my plan is to make the most of my incarceration and return to them as a loving mother and grandmother, not the materialistic parent I was.

I finally understand I no longer want this life. It has impacted too many innocent people- from strangers, to my children and their children who have been without mothers during their incarceration, to my mother and sister who have cared for my grandchildren while their mothers were away. There comes time in everyone's life when things need to change. The time is now. I am 45 and will be 50 or so when released. If I continue on the path I've been on after release I may end up dying in prison. That is not my choice. I understand that these are just words and that the true test will not happen until I am free again. But I believe with the determination I have to succeed, along with my faith and the love I feel from my family my chances of success are great.

Belinda Johnson

March 14, 2003

The Honorable Judge Milton Shadur  
219 S Dearborn Street  
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: Belinda Johnson

Dear Judge Shadur:

My name is Olivia W. Pittman; I am disabled/retired (since 1992). I live on the south side of Chicago in my sister's building (40 years).

I met Ms. Johnson in 1984 or 85. The reason I can't remember the year is simply because I feel I have known her forever. She just "fit right in". I feel she is a relative, not just a friend. I think she is a wonderful person, a loving mother, and a genuine individual.

I hope and pray that you judge her fairly and that she is treated appropriable. She is a good person. And she will always be thought of as "My niece"

Respectfully submitted by:

  
Olivia W. Pittman

March 13, 2003

The Honorable Judge Milton Shadur  
219 S. Dearborn St  
Chicago, IL 60604


Dear Judge Shadur:

My name is JoAnn Hoskin, I am currently employed at Holly Hunt (an upscale furniture designer) located in Chicago's Greektown District. I am the proud mother of two adult children and grandmother of six. I reside in my own building on the south side of Chicago.

I have known Ms. Belinda Johnson for over twenty years and have always known her to be a good mother and an industrious person. She has been and always will be a close family friend.

It is my wish that she be judged fairly and treated accordingly, no more no less and whatever the outcome she will still remain uppermost in my heart and prayers.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Hoskin  
8211 S. Peoria  
Chicago, IL 60620

Dear judge Shadur

My God mother Belinda <sup>a woman</sup> ~~person~~  
I have known all my life. She has  
always been an inspiration to me.  
The way she enjoys giving and  
receiving love. Always giving me  
credit for my accomplishments.  
I know she has made some  
mistakes in her life. But no one  
person is perfect <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ I know  
that she can overcome this situation  
she is in. She has always helped  
me realize the strengths I had.  
And enjoyed watching me grow into  
this dedicated family woman. She  
has embraced God in her life which  
is a positive step. She has grand  
children who adore her and need  
her and I will always depend on  
her love and inspiration to keep  
me focused on life. Please take into  
consideration how this woman has supported  
me mentally for so many years. I have  
always been independent but mentally  
I have fallen weak at times and always

had her to help pull me up dust  
me off and give me strength and  
wisdom to move forward. Maybe now  
it is my chance to give some of my  
strength to someone I love who is  
weak?

Saguaro Wright



## THE HONORABLE JUDGE

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Milton Shadur  
219 S. Dearborn St  
Chicago, IL 60604

April 9<sup>th</sup> 2003

Dear Sir Judge, Milton Shadur

My name Bill Knight , I'm a Site Developer / Project Manger, for the past fifteen years I've known Ms. Johnson for several years, since 1996, some personally and professionally. I met her during the development of a housing site and found her to be a very nice and articulated, a mother of three daughters and grandmother of one at that time and since, now the grandmother of two delightful little children a boy and girl that are apart of her every heart in every way. I believe she has tried to do all she could in seeing that they are raised right and know right from wrong, instill solid values, get a good education and trying hard to giving them a good home as well as providing for them and her three girls.

Now at one time Ms Johnson did work for the company making calls, setting meetings, and other administrative duties, but due to personal family issues, she found, she was needed more at home, making sure her grandson was in school and her daughters were as well. She remain working part time for a while, I feel she thought is was the right thing to do at the time, because she felt schooling an education was very important and she hated when they would miss days or be late.

I believe that Ms. Johnson was trying so hard not to be a failure at being a good mother and also trying to be a father, a grandmother and a provider that some how she realized that she was doing and giving something that even as a child she didn't have, and when some or all the keys of life are missing it's hard to be a single mother and do what's best and make the right choice's, with out all the right tools of family raising , some of us have been fortune enough to have the tools that make us who we are today but if we think outside of the box for just a minute, where would we be if not for those keys of life, ( maybe , maybe not ) .

We all do things that we are not so proud of, whether for life, family or children, right or wrong we make mistakes and we learn from them but at what cost, hopefully not at the cost of the same things we were fighting so hard for.

Ms. Johnson is a very good heart felt, loving and sensitive person , with a lot of good qualities, she's intelligent, computer literate, easy to work with and stable, with a lot left to offer.

Sincerely, B. Knight

Signature 